

November 7, 2011

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

At this time of national fiscal crisis, investments that create jobs and grow our economy must be paramount. One of these is the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and as the nation's mayors, we want to emphasize the benefits that the fund brings to our **economies, communities, and environment**.

As you said in releasing the America's Great Outdoors report earlier this year:

"To make it easier for families to spend time outside no matter where they live, we're going to work with cities and states to build and improve urban parks and waterways, and make it easier to access public lands. ...To help set aside land for conservation and to promote recreation, we're proposing to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund, for only the third time in our history. ... So these are the right steps to take for our environment. But they're also the right steps to take for our country. They help spur the economy. They create jobs by putting more Americans back to work in tourism and recreation. ...They help Americans stay healthier by making it easier to spend time outside. And they'll help carry forth our legacy as a people who don't just make decisions based on short-term gains of any one group but on what's best for the entire nation in the long run."

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is one of these important long-term investments. For 45 years, it has been a crucial source of support to conserve open space and water resources, while also funding new parks, trails, and recreational facilities in urban and rural communities.

Already, outdoor recreation activities contribute \$730 billion annually to the U.S. economy, supporting 6.5 million jobs, according to the Outdoor Industry Foundation. New investments in parks could quickly create an added 100,000 to 200,000 positions—jobs based largely in communities and, thus, hard to outsource.

What's more, natural amenities like parks, open space, and rivers fuel economic investment: They augment surrounding property values—contributing to higher tax revenues—encourage tourism, and attract employers drawn to the enhanced quality of life for residents. The shared outdoor spaces also provide opportunities for recreation and exercise critical to countering skyrocketing rates of childhood obesity and other health problems. Moreover, our parks and public lands protect critical drinking water supplies through watershed, forest, and wetland conservation.

For these reasons, the U.S. Conference of Mayors in July approved a groundbreaking resolution emphasizing the importance of:

- Urban parks as essential elements in a comprehensive approach to urban policy and community development;
- Implementation of the recommendations of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative;
- Full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund to establish and support great urban parks; and
- Greater public and private investment in parks and green space to create healthy, walkable, and sustainable cities.

We'd like to request a meeting in early November with your Administration to share this resolution with you, and discuss how the nation's mayors are working to ensure robust funding for the LWCF and create healthy and vibrant urban parks and open spaces for the 21st century. By working together to protect our natural heritage and leveraging resources like LWCF to provide children and families with access and opportunities to enjoy the outdoors, we can make our communities healthier, sustainable, and economically competitive.

Sincerely,

Phil Gordon
Mayor of Phoenix, AZ

Sam Allevato
Mayor of San Juan Capistrano, CA

Greg Fischer
Mayor of Louisville, KY

Harvey L. Hall
Mayor of Bakersfield, CA

Miguel A. Pulido
Mayor of Santa Ana, CA

Mitch Landrieu
Mayor of New Orleans, LA

Roy Moore
Mayor of Brea, CA

Michael Hancock
Mayor of Denver, CO

Chris Beutler
Mayor of Lincoln, NE

Fred R. Smith
Mayor of Buena Park, CA

Bob Murphy
Mayor of Lakewood, CO

Thomas M. Menino
Mayor of Boston, MA

Ashley Swearengin
Mayor of Fresno, CA

Bill Finch
Mayor of Bridgeport, CT

Dave Bing
Mayor of Detroit, MI

Sukhee Kang
Mayor of Irvine, CA

Pedro Segarra
Mayor of Hartford, CT

R.T. Rybak
Mayor of Minneapolis, MN

Antonio Villaraigosa
Mayor of Los Angeles, CA

Kasim Reed
Mayor of Atlanta, GA

Christopher Coleman
Mayor of St. Paul, MN

Kevin Johnson
Mayor of Sacramento, CA

David H. Bieter
Mayor of Boise, ID

Sean Becker
Mayor-Elect of Bozeman, MT

Edwin M. Lee
Mayor of San Francisco, CA

Rahm Emanuel
Mayor of Chicago, IL

Anthony Foxx
Mayor of Charlotte, NC

Chuck Reed
Mayor of San Jose, CA

Carl Brewer
Mayor of Wichita, KS

Jerramiah Healy
Mayor of Jersey City, NJ

Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor of New York City, NY

Ron Littlefield
Mayor of Chattanooga, TN

Molly Ward
Mayor of Hampton, VA

Frank G. Jackson
Mayor of Cleveland, OH

Lee Leffingwell
Mayor of Austin, TX

Paul D. Fraim
Mayor of Norfolk, VA

Michael Bell
Mayor of Toledo, OH

Mike Rawlings
Mayor of Dallas, TX

Ray Stephanson
Mayor of Everett, WA

Sam Adams
Mayor of Portland, OR

Joe Adame
Mayor of Corpus Christi, TX

Timothy Leavitt
Mayor of Vancouver, WA

Michael Nutter
Mayor of Philadelphia, PA

John F. Cook
Mayor of El Paso, TX

Luke Ravenstahl
Mayor of Pittsburgh, PA

Ralph Becker
Mayor of Salt Lake City, UT

Cc:

White House Senior Advisor and Assistant to the President for Public Engagement and Intergovernmental Affairs Valerie Jarrett

White House Director of the Office of Management and Budget Jacob Lew

White House Council on Environmental Quality Chair Nancy Sutley

U.S. Interior Department Secretary Ken Salazar

U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack